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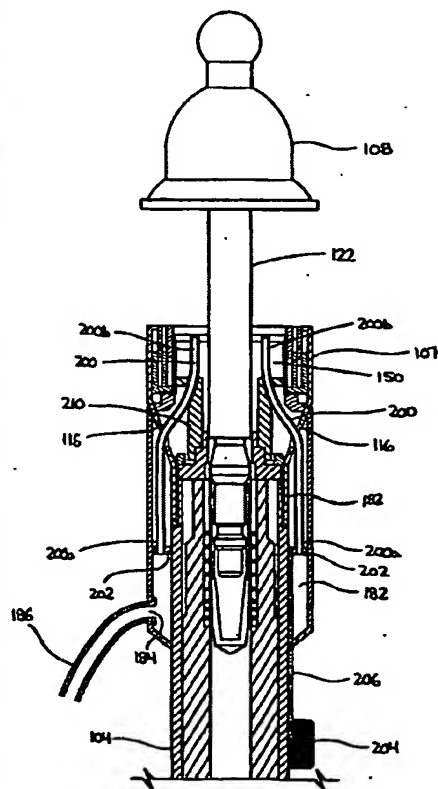
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**(54) Title: VACUUM ASSISTED SURGICAL STAPLER**



**(57) Abstract:** A surgical stapling apparatus having a vacuum device associated therewith is disclosed. The vacuum device may be removable, fixedly secured thereto, or incorporated into the surgical stapling apparatus. The vacuum device may include a resilient band and vacuum tube secured to the shell assembly or body portion of the surgical stapling apparatus. Alternately, a vacuum chamber may be secured about the shell assembly and/or body portion of the stapling apparatus. In addition, one or more vacuum tubes may be positioned in the vacuum chamber. The vacuum tubes, preferably, extend into the shell assembly and are movable between nondeployed and deployed positions such that a distal end of each tube can be selectively positioned at multiple positions between the shell assembly and an anvil. The vacuum tubes can be formed of a shape-memory material such that the tubes point radially outwardly of the shell assembly when the tubes are in the deployed position.

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